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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000361

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: INGOS TO SE NATSIOS: DARFUR SITUATION DETERIORATING

Classified By: CDA Roberto Powers, reason: sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: In a March 3 meeting in Khartoum, members of the INGO steering committee briefed Special Envoy Natsios on humanitarian operations in Darfur. The INGOS, including CARE, Oxfam, Mercy Corps, Goal and MedAir, reported that the situation on the ground had deteriorated since his last visit. Bureaucratic impediments such as expired permits and lack of access to certain areas continue to present major obstacles, and INGOS feel that their work is being increasingly politicized and manipulated by Sudanese media. One INGO representative said the signing of the DPA marked a worsening of the security situation in Darfur. African Union troops who are perceived as trying to enforce an unpopular agreement have come under increasing attack. SE Natsios warned the INGOS that large advocacy groups such as Save Darfur are pressing for aggressive retaliatory operations, and that operational NGOs are the only groups urging restraint. End summary.

Worsening Situation on the Ground

12. (C) The INGOS reported that the number of vehicles taken per week has risen to an average of four, IDP camps have grown increasingly militarized, and road security has dramatically worsened in several areas. One INGO representative working in West Darfur mentioned that few agencies currently travel by road, and helicopter access is very limited. He added that armed factions had targeted NGO facilities in the Zalengei corridor in eastern West Darfur, an area previously considered to be relatively safe. When SE Natsios asked if having 10,000 UN troops there would make any difference, the general sentiment was negative. "Only with a change of attitude on the part of the government," one representative said.

Politicization, Media Campaigns

13. (C) The INGOS also noted examples of recent Sudanese media reports that attempt to portray them as politically motivated and non-neutral. CARE, for example, was accused of espionage in a March 1 newspaper article, and the INGOS are routinely suspected of giving security information to the US. The Oxfam representative, stressing the need for an independent humanitarian coordinator in Darfur, said that INGOS need to be kept "very far away" from any peacekeeping operations agreement. The representative also said that any "unilateral action" makes it even harder for INGOS to operate. While recognizing that certain actions affect the work of INGOS, SE Natsios made it clear that the US and other key European and African nations were not going to limit themselves to UN

initiatives. There are three political triggers that the US and others are looking at, he said: 1) a deterioration in the humanitarian situation; 2) deterioration of the political process; and 3) lack of progress on implementing Kofi Annan's 3-phase plan. "This is fair warning," he cautioned.

Participation in Sudan Consortium

¶4. (C) Regarding the upcoming Sudan Consortium, the INGOs told SE Natsios that they'd be willing to meet in advance with Sudanese officials to discuss their concerns, but only if the government itself arranged the meeting. They also laid out three obstacles concerning the proposed half-day meeting on humanitarian affairs to be held parallel with the consortium: 1) preparation time is very short; 2) the role of national NGOs hasn't been considered; and 3) little likelihood of any final statement actually being implemented.

Lack of Support for AMIS

¶5. (C) Commenting on AMIS' role in Darfur, one representative said that "the degree of disgust and distrust of the AU is hard to overestimate." The INGOs said that the AU in Khartoum faces some of the same bureaucratic impediments as they do, and that the AU needs stronger leadership in the capital. The INGOs also maintained that non-signatories in the Fur areas need to be brought into the picture, and that the expulsion of non-signatories from the cease-fire commissions has contributed to increased violence against AU peacekeepers.

KHARTOUM 00000361 002 OF 002

¶6. (U) SE Natsios cleared this message.
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